
Exchange in University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S.

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BENG4-INFE, Yr 3

My Blog

Studying abroad is such a unique and memorable experience. As an Electronic Engineering student, studying takes up most of the time and is a major part of life. However, with several relaxing out-of-class activities such as cracking Corn Maze, my life in University of Illinois became more colorful.

My Pre-departure Checklist

Student Visa: Apply as soon as you receive the confirmation letter from the exchange university since there may be some uncertain issues for the immigration department such as system breakdown (which I encountered).

Course Registration: Do not worry too much if you have not registered all the courses you want to take as the university usually would offer higher priority to exchange students. You can do it when you get there.

Living Location: Usually you will be assigned to Undergraduate halls but you need to apply online prior to your departure. But do **APPLY EARLY** since the registration would be closed long before semester begins (4 months from my experience). And if you apply late, your preference would not be guaranteed.

Just Arrived...

18 August, 2015 – First Day in UIUC

So excited! Jet lag almost killed me for the first three afternoons. But I still spent my first three days on a general view trip about the school. It is a tremendously huge campus.

Ground transportation from the airport to the accommodation needs to be considered ahead. My peer exchange mates and I did not have any contacts there and no airport shuttle service was operated by the university. As we did not reserve the airport shuttle tickets early, the favorable schedule meeting our need was not available, leading to the three-hour wait at the airport for the shuttle.

Orientation

The orientation hosted by the university was warm and useful. They offered free food and most of the information we needed on arrival there. They also helped in contacting the department course leaders and solving problems about course registrations. And I met many exchange students from different countries. They were fun and very friendly.

My Place

I lived in one of the undergraduate halls and it was great!

My place of residence was a little far from campus and very quiet. The food there was said to be the BEST among other university dining halls. And there were free public buses taking students around the campus and to the classrooms. The only drawback was there was no kitchen in the hall.

I love living in the student dormitory because the students there were so funny and friendly.

My First Class

Monday, 24 August, 2015

The first lecture I attended was CS225 Data Structure. It was such a huge class with 250 students. Students were much more enthusiastic and active than CityU students. Questions never stopped. The lecture given by Dr. Heeran was so comprehensive and clear.

People I Met

I made some local friends in the same class and some at the undergraduate dormitory. In the dorm, there were some fun activities such as movie nights, ice-breaking parties for people to meet together.

What interested me most was their party culture. They held parties as often as possible to celebrate everything they liked. What's more the parties always started midnight.

Out of Classroom

There are hundreds of clubs that you can join. Exchange students can choose whatever activities they want to participate in. However, due to time constraint, internships are mostly not

available to exchange students. My main focus was doing well in my other courses.

I also participated in many other activities organized by the university exchange engineering division, such as the Corn Maze Cracking, the Reindeer Ride, etc..

Money

Although the living expenses here are generally higher than Hong Kong, there are ways to save. If you live in apartments, you can choose to cook by yourself, which costs much less than dining in the dining halls.

Goodbye

It is always hard to be apart from a familiar environment. I really love my friends and teachers there. They encouraged and inspired me so much. Their devotion to knowledge always reminds me of the importance of learning.

Home Sweet Home

After staying in America for one semester, I found myself more determined and clear on what I want to do and what is precious in my life.

Currently the most important thing for me is studying. Knowledge is infinite and learning is a life-long road to go.

Sharing

America is a very powerful country and its universities and engineering programs are truly the best in the world. Working with all these talented people will make you aspire for your goals.

Overall Rating

DEFINITELY 5 = the most satisfied



Student Ambassador Scheme

Adventure Camp – More In-depth Understanding of “Preparation” and “Teamwork”

LAI Wing Yan, William

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I am a new Electronic Engineering Student Ambassador (EESA) this year. We had our very first training, Adventure Camp, on 20 and 21 February 2016. I was one of the team leaders and it was a valuable experience for me as a Student Ambassador.

The camp included lots of challenging tasks such as orienteering, lighting up a fire with only 3 matches and wild cooking without modern utensils, etc.. We had to prepare well before the start of the camp. We needed to study not only the topics related to the challenges set by the coach but also prepare lots of gears to ensure our personal safety. I still remembered the coach reminded us that the camp did not start at the time we gathered to head to the camp venue, but it had actually got started from the time we made all sorts of preparation. How to get the preparation work done perfectly became crucial. We may face different kinds of projects in the coming year, and prior preparation will always be the key to success.

The purposes of these tasks were not only offering an opportunity for us to live in an ancient way, but most importantly to learn the essence of teamwork. These challenges were too complicated that we could not finish them individually. We had to divide it into smaller parts and everyone was responsible for their own tasks. Finally with joint efforts the challenges were completed